

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 06604 021505Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NIC-01 EUR-25 OMB-01 AID-20

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1391

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT BL

SUBJ: MINISTER OF STATE ANNOUNCES ELECTION GUIDELINES

1. IN OCTOBER 31 PRESS CONFERENCE, MINISTER OF STATE WALDO CERRUTO ANNOUNCED THAT ELECTORAL LAW OF 1965 WILL BE IN EFFECT FOR PROJECTED 1974 ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO THAT LAW, ALL CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE WHO PRESENTLY OCCUPY OFFICIAL POSITIONS MUST RESIGN THEIR POSTS 180 DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY. THUS, IF PRESIDENT BANZER WISHES TO PRESENT A CANDIDACY FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN THE COMING ELECTIONS, NOW TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 2, 1974, HE MUST RESIGN FROM OFFICE BY DECEMBER 2. ELECTORAL LAW ALSO STATES THAT GOVERNMENT MUST ISSUE DECREE OFFICIALLY CONVOKING ELECTIONS AT LEAST SIXTY DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY.

2. IN OTHER COMMENTS AT PRESS CONFERENCE, CERRUTO INDICATED THAT ALL PARTIES WILL HAVE FREE ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE UNDER THE PROPOSED ELECTORAL SCHEME, AND CALLED AGAIN FOR A TOTAL POLITICAL AMNESTY PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. CERRUTO ALSO NOTED THAT HIS EFFORT TO MAKE THE BOLIVIAN IDENTITY CARD THE SOLE FORM OF IDENTIFICATION FOR VOTING PURPOSES HAD FAILED, DUE TO BOTH OPPOSITION BY PDC/PRA AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES AND SHEER PHYSICAL INABILITY OF GOVERNMENT

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APPARATUS TO ISSUE CARNETS TO ESTIMATED 820,000 CAMPESINOS

WHO CURRENTLY LACK THEM. INSTEAD, VARIOUS FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION
WILL BE PERMITTED, INCLUDING BIRTH AND BAPTISM CERTIFICATES,
FAMILY BOOKS, MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS AND TESTIMONY
OF WITNESSES. ALSO, VOTING WILL BE CARRIED OUT VIA A
SINGLE MULTI-COLOR BALLOT, CONTAINING THE SYMBOLS OF ALL
THE COMPETING POLITICAL PARTIES AND COALITIONS, IN CONTRAST
TO THE PRACTICE IN 1966 AND EARLIER ELECTIONS OF USING
SEPARATE COLORED BALLOTS FOR EACH PARTY. FINALLY, CERRUTO
STATED THAT TOTAL ELECTORATE FOR 1974 ELECTION HAS NOW
BEEN ESTIMATED AT 2,638,230 PERSONS,
OF TOTAL ESTIMATED BOLIVIAN POPULATION OF 5,470,100.
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